

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This Amendment is being filed in response to the Office Action dated December 10, 2008. Reconsideration and allowance of the application in view of the amendments provided above and the remarks to follow are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8 are pending in the Application.

In the Office Action, suggested guidelines for the specification are provided including section headings. Applicants appreciate being provided the suggested guidelines, however, again respectfully decline to add the headings as they are not required in accordance with MPEP §608.01(a), and could be inappropriately used in interpreting the specification.

In the Office Action, claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as allegedly being indefinite for not being complete. This rejection of the claims is respectfully traversed. It is respectfully submitted that the claim provide "control means ... for controlling opening and closing of said valve, said valve being controlled to be open if ..." Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the claim recitation is clear. However, in the interest of advancing consideration and allowance of the claims, claim 1 is amended herein to recite "... otherwise

said valve is controlled to be closed." Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is in proper form and it is respectfully requested that this rejection of claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

In the Final Office Action, claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,642,579 to Netten ("Netten") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,042,179 to van der Meer ("van der Meer") and U.S. Patent no. 2,615,265 to Maykemper ("Maykemper"). Claims 3-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Netten, van der Meer, Maykemper, and further in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2006/0213092 to Leta ("Leta"). Further, claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Netten in view of van der Meer, U.S. Patent No. 5,536,375 to Vogelmann ("Vogelmann") and Maykemper. In addition, claims 3-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Netten, Vogelmann, van der Meer, Maykemper, and further in view of Leta. The rejection of claims 1-8 is respectfully traversed. It is respectfully submitted that claims 1-8 are allowable over any combination of Netten, Vogelmann, van der Meer, Maykemper, and Leta for at least the following reasons.

Netten shows a steam iron wherein "steam production is made dependent on the temperature of the fabric a fabric temperature sensor (24) embedded in the soleplate (2)." (See, Netten, FIG. 1 and abstract.) Netten shows that (emphasis added) "[a] fabric temperature sensor 24 is embedded in the front portion of the soleplate 2 and is surrounded by the steam vents 20 as shown in FIG. 2. The fabric temperature sensor 24 slightly touches the fabric during ironing and sends a fabric temperature signal FTS to the controller 16 which is indicative of the actual temperature of the fabric being ironed." (See, Netten, Col. 4, lines 47-53.)

Netten makes clear that (emphasis added) "[a]s soon as the soleplate 2 touches the cool cloth the relatively low temperature of the cloth is sensed by the fabric temperature sensor 24 and the corresponding fabric temperature signal FTS signals the controller to activate the water pump 10 by sending the pump signal PS to the water pump 10. The water is converted to steam in the hot steam chamber 12 and hot steam reaches the cloth via the steam duct 22 and the steam vents 20." (See, Netten, Col. 5, lines 8-15.)

Further, in Netten, "[w]hen the fabric temperature signal FTS from the fabric temperature sensor 24 signals the condensing temperature of steam (about 100° C.), the controller 16 stops the production of

steam by sending an appropriate pump signal PS to the water pump 10." (See, Netten, Col. 5, lines 28-32.) Accordingly, as clear from Netten, pumping of water into steam chamber is merely controlled based on whether the temperature of fabric in contact with the temperature sensor is below the condensing temperature of steam.

In addition, it is respectfully asserted that the reliance of the Final Office Action on van der Meer as disclosing a control means for opening and closing a valve if the ratio between the flow rate (g/min) of the pump and the power of the heating means is in a range of 1:20 to 1:38, is clearly misplaced.

Van der Meer shows in FIG. 1 a steam valve 46 that is used to open and close the steam pipe between the steam generator 40 and the steam passages (not shown) in the soleplate (see Col. 5, lines 63-67). Van der Meer shows a control circuit that is equipped for closing the steam valve when a position detector indicates that the iron is in a position other than the position occurring during normal use (see, Col. 4, lines 15-26; Col. 13, lines 39-44). Although Van der Meer discusses various steam flow rates (in Col. 11, line 47 - Col. 12, line 22) as cited in the Final Office Action, there is no teaching by van der Meer that the control circuit specifically controls the steam valve (46) to open if the

ratio between the flow rate (g/min) of the pump and the power (W) of the heating means is in a range of 1:20 to 1:38, otherwise said valve is controlled to be closed.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the device of claim 1 is not anticipated or made obvious by the teachings of Netten, Vogelmann, van der Meer, Maykemper, and Leta. For example, Netten, Vogelmann, van der Meer, Maykemper, and Leta does not disclose or suggest, a device that amongst other patentable elements, comprises (illustrative emphasis added) "control means ... for controlling opening and closing of said valve, said valve being controlled to be open if a ratio between the flow rate (g/min) of the pump and the power (W) of the heating means is in a range of 1:20 to 1:38 to control wetness of steam delivered by the atomizing device otherwise said valve is controlled to be closed" as recited in claim 1.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 is allowable over the combination of Netten, Vogelmann, van der Meer, Maykemper, and Leta, and notice to this effect is earnestly solicited. Claims 2-8 depend from claim 1 and accordingly are allowable over the combination of Netten, Vogelmann, van der Meer, Maykemper, and Leta for at least this reason as well

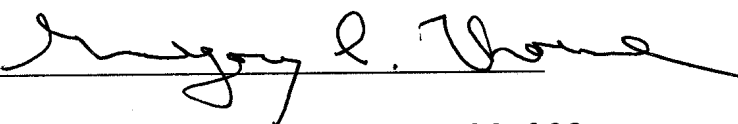
as for the separately patentable elements contained in each of the claims. Accordingly, separate consideration of each of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

In addition, Applicants deny any statement, position or averment of the Examiner that is not specifically addressed by the foregoing argument and response. Any rejections and/or points of argument not addressed would appear to be moot in view of the presented remarks. However, the Applicants reserve the right to submit further arguments in support of the above stated position, should that become necessary. No arguments are waived and none of the Examiner's statements are conceded.

Amendment in Reply to Office Action of December 10, 2008

Applicants have made a diligent and sincere effort to place this application in condition for immediate allowance and notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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